

Introduction

The West Piedmont Planning District is made up of the counties of Franklin, Henry, Patrick and Pittsylvania; the cities of Danville and Martinsville; and the towns of Boones Mill, Chatham, Gretna, Hurt, Ridgeway, Rocky Mount, and Stuart. The area begins in the Blue Ridge and extends into the Piedmont physiographic province. The ruggedly beautiful landscapes of the Blue Ridge Mountains provide a variety of recreational opportunities ranging from the scenic views along the Blue Ridge Parkway to the trout streams of the Pinnacles of Dan. These attractions and this setting are popular for recreation and as family vacation destinations.

Fairy Stone State Park cabins and campgrounds have long been a favorite destination for Virginians and visitors from out of state. The entire park, which is one of the six original state parks opened to the public in 1936, is 4,537 acres; it also contains a 168-acre lake for fishing, swimming and small boat use. Philpott Reservoir is a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) flood retention and power production reservoir, which provides a large body of power-boating water far inland from the tidal rivers and bays of the state. Canoeing, fishing and other water-based recreational opportunities are provided in the many miles of high quality rivers and streams that drain into this area. The Smith River below Philpott Reservoir is a high quality brown trout fishery enjoyed by anglers from all over the country. Smith Mountain Lake, a hydroelectric power impoundment, provides 20,000 acres of flat water and nearly 500 miles of shoreline. This lake has a state park with traditional park offerings, private campgrounds open to the public, public boat ramps, marinas, docks and marine repair facilities. The West Central 4-H Center is located on the lake and provides lodging and conference facilities when summer programs for youth are not being offered.

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) manages three state-owned wildlife management areas in the district. Fairy Stone Farms, Turkeycock Mountain and White Oak Mountain wildlife management areas provide more than 10,000 acres of public lands for hunting, nature study, trail use and open space.

Franklin County has entered into an agreement with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to take over management of the 37-acre parcel of Smith Mountain Lake State Park that lies within Franklin County and is across the lake from the park.

Franklin County will develop recreational facilities on this parcel, thereby enhancing public access to the lake from the southern side. In partnership with DCR, DGIF and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Franklin County plans to develop recreational facilities such as beach frontage, boating access, fishing, picnicking opportunities and walking/biking facilities. Also, Franklin County has adopted a trail and greenways plan (*Franklin County Trail System Plan 2004*) that addresses recreational trails as well as bicycle and pedestrian trails as alternative transportation corridors.

Henry County and the City of Martinsville have formed a Recreational Facilities Authority to jointly manage a \$4 million soccer complex and \$16 million arena for the region. The City of Martinsville, Henry County, non-profit organizations and citizen groups are working together to plan and develop trails, greenways, and blueways along the Smith River. The Smith River Trail system will consist of multi-use trails, riverside parks, and non-motorized boat landings along the Smith. The planned multi-use trails will be for biking and walking and will follow portions of the Smith River and lead into the City of Martinsville through a rails-to-trails project using segments of the abandoned Danville and Western Railroad. Public access to the Smith River has been enhanced for fishing and boating with the addition of three new public access areas.

Citizens in Patrick and Henry County are planning the Mayo River Trail between Fieldale and Stuart using portions of the bed of the abandoned Danville and Western Railroad.

The City of Danville has been making great progress in implementing its community trails and greenways plan. Some sections of abandoned rail line have been converted to trails, and connectors have been developed along the Dan River and throughout the city. Danville has also developed a skateboard park to provide participants with safe, off-street play areas. On the eastern side of Danville in Pittsylvania County, local supporters have developed six miles of the former Richmond to Danville Railroad into a trail that runs from Ringgold to the Pittsylvania County-Halifax County line. Danville is planning to connect its trail system to the trailhead in Ringgold. The remaining 20 miles of that rail corridor between the county line and South Boston are being acquired from Norfolk Southern and will be converted to a trail in the future.

The population of this region as measured by the 2006 census was 247,500. Like other areas of the state, most counties are growing while the cities have lost about 6 percent of their population. Henry County has shown a small population decline since the 2000 census was conducted, while Franklin County has seen population growth.

Recommendations applicable to all regions are found in chapters III through IX. To meet needs established in the *2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan* (VOP), it is important to integrate these recommendations with those that follow for Region 12 into regional and local planning and development strategies.

Outdoor recreation

For a general discussion of outdoor recreation trends, issues and planning considerations in Virginia, see Chapter II: Outdoor Recreation Issues, Trends and Survey Findings, and Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Planning and Related Issues.

Public participation in recreation is high and the 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* (VOS) recorded high demand for most activities. These figures did not include imported demand generated by visitors. The needs analysis indicates a shortage of bicycle trail miles, campsites, playgrounds, swimming pools and hiking trails. Facilities for all other activities were found to be adequate, especially near urban areas. In more rural areas, planning and funding are needed to create additional park facilities, especially developed facilities. Tourists place considerable demand on recreational resources — creating shortages of trails, camping and water sport opportunities. When tourism is factored in, shortages are indicated in other activities (see Table X-12). In the more rural areas and in small towns, there is a need for additional developed recreation facilities to serve local residents.

According to the Commonwealth of Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts, *Comparative Report on Local Government Revenues and Expenditures* (year ended June 30, 2005), per capita spending on parks and recreation for each locality in this region was: Henry, \$49.56; Patrick, \$7.20; Pittsylvania, \$0.48; the City of Danville, \$102.80; and the City of Martinsville, \$58.49. This compares to a statewide per capita spending on parks and recreation of \$55.31, including \$85.51 from towns, \$43.75 from counties, and \$76.45 from cities.

Land conservation

A detailed discussion on statewide awareness of the need for conservation of farmland, parks, natural areas, and historical and cultural resources is found in Chapter III: Land Conservation. Conservation lands in the region are shown on Map X-24.

Land Trusts and Conservation Programs Operating in Region 12

- Virginia Outdoors Foundation
- Trust For Public Land
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Conservation Fund
- Western Virginia Land Trust
- Forest Legacy Program

Green infrastructure

Information about green infrastructure is found in Chapter IV: Green Infrastructure. Regional recommendations for green infrastructure include:

- Local and regional agencies should become informed and educate constituents about green infrastructure planning, including guidance on local zoning initiatives for changing community design and transportation systems.

Programs

The following recommendations integrate statewide program initiatives into responsive regional strategies for outdoor recreation and conservation. The statewide program areas addressed in this section include: trails and greenways, blueways and water access, historic and landscape resources, scenic resources, Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways, scenic rivers, watersheds, environmental and land stewardship education, and the private sector. Recommendations are bulleted or numbered and are not sequenced by state or local priorities. Numbered recommendations are site specific to the regional map at the end of this section (see Map X-25)

Trails and greenways

For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiatives, Greenways and Trails.

Statewide trunkline trails

1 The proposed **Trans-Virginia Southern Trail** will run from runs from Cumberland Gap to the Chesapeake Bay across the southern portion of the state. In Region 12, the trail runs from the Blue Ridge Parkway to Fairy Stone State Park and Philpott Reservoir along the Smith River Trail to Martinsville. It then follows portions of the Danville and Western Railway and will connect to Danville using various existing and planned corridors. From Danville, the trail will follow the abandoned Norfolk, Franklin and Danville Railroad and the Richmond to Danville Railroad corridors to link with components of the Tobacco Heritage Trail. This will then link with the Virginia Beach Pipeline Trail, which will connect to the existing and proposed components of the Tidewater trail system. This "Cumberland Gap to the Chesapeake Bay Trail" will connect many of the towns in Southern Virginia and provide the backbone for many local trail systems. Regional and local organizations should partner with national and state organizations and agencies to continue plans and implementation for this trail.

Regional trails

The following are greenway and trail proposals for this region:

2 The **Smith River Trail** system should continue to be developed by Henry County, the City of Martinsville and private entities along the Smith River and into Martinsburg using segments of the abandoned Danville and Western Railroad. These multi-use trails will become part of the Trans-Virginia Southern Trail and will be connected with Fairy Stone State Park and with the Tobacco Heritage Trail at Danville.

3 A system of trails and greenways throughout Danville should continue to be implemented using city-owned utility rights-of-way and other public and private properties. Components of the **Danville Riverwalk Trail** have been completed, and plans to extend the trail are under development. The Danville trail system should be extended to connect with the Richmond to Danville Rail-Trail at Ringgold.

4 A number of opportunities exist throughout the region for converting **abandoned railroads** to trails. Timely conversion is recommended to prevent further deterioration of existing beds, trestles and historic properties.

5 The section of the former **Richmond-Danville Railroad** line has been developed as a rail-to-trail from Ringgold to the Pittsylvania-Halifax County line.

Roanoke River Rails to Trails, Inc. should continue the effort to acquire the right-of-way from the Pittsylvania County-Halifax County line to South Boston. This rail line parallels the Dan River and would provide a terrestrial component to the proposed Dan River Canoe Trail.

6 Patrick and Henry counties should continue to plan the **Mayo River Trail**, which uses portions of the abandoned Danville and Western Railroad from Fieldale west toward Stuart.

7 The **Pigg River Heritage Trail** has regional historic significance and will provide the Town of Rocky Mount with pedestrian and bicycle facilities that could connect **Waid Park Recreation Area** with **Grassy Hills Natural Area Preserve**. DCR, the Department of Historic Resources (DHR), Franklin County and the Town of Rocky Mount should partner to implement these trail segments.

Water Access

A discussion of the water access in the Commonwealth can be found in Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Water Access and Blueways. Water access recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should establish cooperative agreements among localities, other agencies and private landowners to meet the increasing need for public access to recreational waters.
- Regional and local agencies should identify strategies to make additional waterfront resources available for public use.
- Regional and local agencies should provide adequate support facilities and services, such as restrooms, concessions, parking and maintenance for existing and proposed public water and beach access areas.
- Regional and local agencies should acquire or maintain access to existing public beaches and water access sites that may be jeopardized by changes in land use or development activities.
- The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and local government should expand public access to water by developing parking and launch facilities at bridge crossings.
- State, regional and local agencies should enhance public access on the Banister, Dan, Staunton, and both forks of the Mayo River.
- 8** State, regional and local organizations should develop canoe trails and maps to facilitate trip plan-

ning on the **Pigg River** in Franklin and Pittsylvania counties and the **Blackwater River** in Franklin County.

9 The **Smith River** is an outstanding trout fishery in the stretch below Philpott Dam. While three new public access sites were added in 2006, continued efforts should be made to enhance the fishery and increase public access where feasible. Suitable segments of the river that support recreational flows should be enhanced for use as a blueway. The Corps should consider weekend recreational releases from Philpott Dam.

10 The **Mayo River** system has the potential to become a full service recreational resource. With state park development occurring on the North Carolina portion of the river, there are opportunities to extend the range of services and facilities into Virginia. The current feasibility study (see Recommendations 25 and 26 below) being conducted by the state will address some of the access and use areas which should be developed to support a water trail. Regional and local governments and other stakeholders should work with canoeing groups and landowners to provide any missing components.

11 The **Staunton River** below Leesville Dam supports recreational boating for most of the season. While DGIF offers a series of public access areas along the river, there is a need for additional access and public use areas to meet all the requirements for a functional water trail. Local governments should work with canoeing groups and landowners to provide the missing components.

12 The **Dan River Blueway** is a canoe trail that currently is developed and managed as a trail only in the North Carolina section of the Dan River. This trail should be continued into Virginia and extended to Staunton River State Park. A series of managed access and public use areas should be provided to meet the needs of canoe trail users while protecting riparian property owners.

13 The **Banister River** in Pittsylvania County should be developed as a blueway and extended to join with the proposed blueway in Halifax County.

14 Emphasis should be placed on locating access sites at bridge crossings so that both sides of the river are adequately served. Where appropriate, canoe trails could be developed along rivers through the creation of portages around dams and other river obstacles. Special attention should be given to the provision of additional access opportunities on **Smith Mountain**

Lake and **Leesville Lake**, and the **Blackwater and Pigg** rivers. A newly developed river access facility at Lynch Landing in Franklin County has provided a much needed access site to the Pigg River. Work should continue on the removal of the dam on the Pigg River and the development of the Whitewater Park near Rocky Mount.

15 The **Smith River** offers good fishing and canoeing. While three new public access sites were added to the Smith in 2006, additional access needs to be developed where possible. The Smith River Trail should improve riverside access considerably.

Historic and landscape resources

Consideration should be given to evaluating potential historic and landscape recommendations in this region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Historic and Landscape Resources. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should identify historic and archaeological resources that can be used for tourism, recreation and education. These resources should be included in local land use planning and decision-making processes to promote preservation and protection.
- Regional and local agencies should build local historic attractions, historical societies, museums and other tourism organizations in the region to include the Virginia Association of Museums, Virginia Civil War Trails, APVA Preservation Virginia, the Virginia Main Street Program and others to enhance local heritage tourism, educational and recreational offerings.
- Regional and local agencies should encourage local governments and private organizations that own historic properties in the region to manage properties effectively for long-term protection and to maximize public benefit consistent with the nature of the historic property.
- Regional and local agencies should recognize the multiple historic and cultural resources within the rural landscape through rural historic districts.
- Regional and local agencies should support the creation of other heritage area programs to promote tourism and preservation in distinctive regions.
- Local government and local and regional organizations should work with the state to meet the critical need for county-wide surveys of historic and architectural resources in Henry and Patrick counties.

Scenic resources

Consideration should be given to potential scenic recommendations in this region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Resources. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should develop corridor management plans for scenic byways, blueways, greenways and scenic rivers to assure preservation of the scenic quality of the corridor.
- Regional and local agencies should protect the scenic value of lands adjacent to publicly-owned properties, as well as the scenic value of working agricultural and forestal areas key to maintaining a sense of place and the economic vitality of the region. Scenic attributes to be considered include:
 - Encourage development away from mountaintops to protect significant vistas.
 - Consider timber harvesting impacts on key viewsheds.
 - Protect viewsheds along river corridors and scenic byways.
 - Create scenic overlooks and vista cuts along Virginia byways and scenic highways to enhance the visual experience of traveling.

16 Linville Mountain in Franklin County is an important scenic viewshed from the Blue Ridge Parkway and a local and regional effort should be made to protect it from development impacts.

Scenic highways and Virginia byways

Opportunities to traverse Virginia's scenic and cultural landscapes are enhanced through nationally recognized designation. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways.

There has been a tremendous interest in thematic driving trails including Civil War trails, the Wilderness Road Trail, Birding and Wildlife Trails, Revolutionary War trails, the African-American Heritage Trail system, and other driving tour routes. Specifically, the Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail, begins in Rocky Mount and continues on to the coalfield region of western Virginia connecting points of interest such as the Blue Ridge Institute, Floyd County Store, and the Carter Fold.

Scenic roads recommendations for the region include:

- Regional and local agencies should recognize and

nominate scenic roads for designation as Virginia byways.

- Regional and local agencies should partner with other state, local and professional organizations to develop corridor management plans to protect the scenic assets of byway corridors.
- Regional and local agencies should incorporate Virginia byways and scenic highways into local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances to ensure viewsheds are conserved and the sense of place retained along these corridors.
- Regional and local agencies should support designation of nationally qualified historic corridors to increase civic engagement and foster heritage tourism.
- Local jurisdictions should identify and nominate potential scenic roads for designation as Virginia Byways.
- Local governments should partner with other state, local and professional organizations to determine implementation strategies to protect the scenic assets of byway corridors.
- Communities along the Blue Ridge Parkway should consider strengthening local comprehensive plans and creating special zoning regulations to protect the unique scenic and economic benefits associated with scenic values and parkway viewsheds.

The region's beautiful mountains and river valleys are accessed by a system of well-maintained roads. Several of these roads are particularly scenic. The following road segments are potential Virginia Byways and should be evaluated to determine if they qualify for designation:

17 Route 8 from the Floyd County line to the North Carolina state line in Patrick County.

18 Routes 346 and 623 from Route 57 in Patrick County to the Franklin County line.

19 Routes 108 and 890 in Henry and Franklin counties from Martinsville to Penhook.

20 Route 863 in Pittsylvania County from Route 58 to the North Carolina state line.

21 Route 640 in Pittsylvania County beginning at Route 29 north of Blairs to Shockoe; then Route 832 from Shockoe to Chatham.

22 Route 57 from its junction with Route 8 in Patrick County to Martinsville.

- 23** **Route 648**, Kibler Valley Road, from Route 103 to the Pinnacle power plant in Patrick County.

Scenic rivers

For detailed information about the Virginia's Scenic Rivers Program and its purpose, benefits and designation process, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiative, Scenic Rivers. Regional and local recommendations include:

- Localities should adopt planning tools, e.g., land use overlays, corridor management plans, that will afford special recognition and protection to Virginia's scenic rivers.

The following river segment has been evaluated and found to qualify for designation as a Virginia Scenic River.

- 24** The **Blackwater River** from Route 220 to Smith Mountain Lake in Franklin County.

Concerning the items below, Numbers 25 and 26: DCR will complete *A Feasibility Study for Establishing a state park along the South Mayo and North Mayo Rivers in Henry County* by November 30, 2007. Included in the 2007 General Assembly resolution (HJR No. 709) mandating this study is a request to evaluate the rivers for Scenic River designation.

- 25** The **South Mayo River** in Patrick and Henry counties from Route 695 to the North Carolina state line.

- 26** The **North Mayo River** in Henry County from Route 695 to the North Carolina state line.

The following river segments are potential Virginia Scenic Rivers and should be evaluated to determine suitability for designation:

- 27** The **Smith River** from Route 8 to Philpott Reservoir in Patrick County, from Philpott Dam to Bassett and from Route 622 to the North Carolina line in Henry County.

- 28** The **Sandy River** in Pittsylvania County.

- 29** The **Dan River** in its entirety.

- 30** The **Pigg River** in its entirety.

- 31** The **Staunton River** from Altavista to Long Island.

Watershed resources

In this region, the Dan River Basin Association is a major voice in watershed planning and management

issues. For information about Virginia's watershed programs, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Virginia's Watershed Programs.

Watershed groups in Region 12

- Dan River Basin Association
- Roanoke River Basin Association
- Clean Virginia Waterways
- Virginia Conservation Network

Environmental and land stewardship education

For detailed information on Environmental and Land Stewardship education, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Environmental and Land Stewardship Education. Environmental and land stewardship recommendations for this region include:

- Local and regional environmental education organizations should assess the outdoor environmental education facilities existing in this region.

Federal programs

For information on federal programs affecting Virginia's outdoor recreation and conservation opportunities, see Chapter IX-A: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency.

National parks

- Local and regional government, user groups and nonprofits should work with the National Park Service (NPS) to revise policy in order to allow mountain bikes to use appropriate national park trails.

32 The **Blue Ridge Parkway** provides a diversity of dispersed recreational opportunities in the spectacular setting of the Blue Ridge Mountains. A number of trails, historic sites, campgrounds and scenic vistas attract more than 10 million visitors each year to the Virginia portion of this popular national park. The Rocky Knob Recreation Area in Floyd and Patrick counties provides a variety of recreation attractions including the Rock Castle Gorge Trail, camping, picnicking and other services. Plans are underway to expand offerings at Rocky Knob to include an education center and other amenities. Due to site limitations, acquisition of additional land may be required. The Smart View Recreation Area, a little further north on the Parkway, also provides a range of recreational offerings.

The Trans-Virginia Southern Trail planners are seeking a route that will connect the Blue Ridge Parkway near Galax with Fairy Stone State Park. NPS planners should work with state and local trail planners to explore such a connector route.

Localities through which the parkway passes should maintain the scenic viewsheds and natural environments necessary for the continued popularity and national significance of the parkway. All plans and programs should recognize these values, and any activities within the parkway's viewshed should be designed to enhance visitor experiences and the attractiveness of the area. A special effort should be made to provide an adequate buffer between the parkway and development activities. The Blue Ridge Parkway Consortium may be able to address techniques for establishing this buffer as well as deal with other inconsistencies of land use along the parkway.

33 The Booker T. Washington National Monument, located in Franklin County, is an historic commemorative property situated in an area that is rapidly changing character from a rural, pastoral setting to residential subdivisions and shopping centers. Route 122 between Burnt Chimney and Smith Mountain Lake is a very scenic road corridor with several National Register sites, including the National Monument, located along it. An effort should be made to acquire conservation or historic easements on the properties along this corridor to ensure protection of the pastoral setting in which the Booker T. Washington farm is located. Efforts should especially be made to acquire ownership or easements on lands adjacent to the site that are critical to protection of the setting. Encroaching development is a primary issue. The park is implementing its General Management Plan, which was completed in 2000, as funding allows. Addressing accessibility issues and improving facilities are included in the plan.

The park staff has played an active role in regional trail discussions, and they are working with Franklin County and other partners to link their site with other public areas identified in the *Franklin County Trail System Plan 2004*.

Other federal facilities

34 Philpott Dam and Reservoir (owned and managed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers) in Franklin, Patrick and Henry counties contributes substantially to the supply of motor boating, sailing, skiing, canoeing and fishing opportunities in the region. The reservoir property also provides camping, trails, nature study and bank fishing opportunities. As

use levels for offered activities increase, consideration should be given to providing additional access, camping and day-use facilities. The fishery below Philpott Dam (on the Smith River) supports a significant brown trout fishery. The Corps should continue to cooperate with DGIF to adjust releases from the dam in support of an enhanced trout fishery.

One of the most important aspects of this property is public ownership of the entire shoreline. Unlike most lakes in Virginia, access to the lake for bank fishing and wildlife or scenic viewing is not blocked by private shoreline ownership. The Corps should continue their policy of retaining the ownership of the shoreline on their lakes. In addition to the availability to the public of the Philpott Lake 100-mile shoreline, the Corps also manages more than 6,000 acres of forest around the lake. DGIF manages 5,321 acres of adjacent public land as the Fairystone Farms Wildlife Management Area.

DCR is developing equestrian facilities at Fairy Stone State Park. The new equestrian campground and day-use area will attract riders from throughout the mid-Atlantic region. An expanded trail system that includes state park, wildlife management area and Corps lands will enhance the attractiveness of the area to equestrians and, therefore, have a positive economic benefit on the region.

The Trans-Virginia Southern Trail will be connecting trails west of the Blue Ridge Parkway with trails in Fairy Stone State Park and the Smith River Trail. The Corps is encouraged to cooperate with state and local trail planners to identify the best route through the Corps' project lands for this trail.

State facilities and programs

For a discussion of state facilities and programs throughout the entire Commonwealth, see Chapter IX-B: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency or program.

State parks

35 Fairy Stone State Park (4,537 acres), located in Patrick and Henry counties, is partially bounded by the DGIF's Fairystone Farms Wildlife Management Area and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Philpott Reservoir and Dam. The park's 168-acre Fairy Stone Lake flows into Philpott Reservoir. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Fairy Stone is one of the original six Virginia state parks opened in June 1936. The park offerings include 24 cabins, one lodge, a campground with water and electric sites, a group camp, picnicking and four shelters, visitor cen-

ter, Fayerdale Hall Conference Center, boat launch, fishing opportunities and trails. A swim beach, snack bar, and boat rentals are available during the summer season. Guided nature and history hikes, bluegrass music, fairy stone hunts, Junior Rangers, and other activities are offered through much of the year. School and outreach programs are also available.

Through the 2002 General Obligation Bond (GOB), funding has been allocated for dredging the lake and improving the boat ramp, constructing an equestrian campground and support facility, improving trails and acquiring land. The surrounding public land creates opportunities for expanded trail systems and other cooperative programming. The park should participate in the development of the Trans-Virginia Southern Trail as relates to its location in the park vicinity.

36 Smith Mountain Lake State Park (1,248 acres) is primarily situated on the Bedford County shore of the lake. A 37-acre peninsula (actually an island connected to the mainland by a causeway) is on the Franklin County shore of the lake. However, it should be noted that this small parkland peninsula is currently leased to Franklin County for development as a local park, which could include water access, fishing and picnicking. Smith Mountain Lake is the second largest body of freshwater in the state, and the state park offers a wide range of activities including swimming, fishing, boating, trails, camping, cabins, picnicking and a visitor center, as well as interpretive and educational programming and special events.

State natural area preserves

DCR has, as of November 2006, documented 147 occurrences of 65 rare species and natural communities in Region 12. Twenty species are globally rare and five are federally threatened or endangered. Sixty-seven conservation sites have been identified in the district. Of these, 24 (36 percent) have received some level of protection through ownership or management by state, federal and non-government organizations. However, only one site is protected well enough to ensure the long-term viability of the rare species and natural communities they support.

DCR recommends that all unprotected conservation sites, and all unprotected portions of partially protected sites, be targeted for future land conservation efforts. The appropriate method of protection will vary with each site but may include placing the site on Virginia's Registry of Natural Areas, developing a voluntary management agreement with the landowner, securing a conservation easement through a local land trust, acquiring the site through a locality or local

land trust, dedicating the site as a natural area preserve with the current owner, or acquiring the site as a state-owned natural area preserve.

Within Region 12, DCR is particularly interested in protecting:

- Biologically significant low-elevation outcrop communities in Franklin County.
- Habitat for the federally endangered small-anthered bittercress in Patrick County.
- Riparian areas in watersheds that support the federally endangered Roanoke logperch and other rare aquatic species.
- Additional lands around Grassy Hill Natural Area Preserve.

37 Grassy Hills Natural Area Preserve was established in 2000 near Rocky Mount in Franklin County. This property will be managed to protect and enhance the special habitats and plant communities located on the 1,347-acre property. In 2006, another donation was made that increased the size of the property by 147 acres. Opportunities for nature study programs will be afforded by this addition to the Natural Areas System. There is significant local interest with regard to the extent of public access opportunities that may become available at Grassy Hill. It may be advantageous for both state and neighboring local jurisdictions to jointly examine a usage plan that would address citizen outdoor recreational needs as they pertain to this nature preserve. A trail system was developed on the preserve in 2005 that affords visitors managed access to the property for nature study.

State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas (WMA)

- DGIF should continue to work with local and regional governments to support the Birding and Wildlife Trail program.
- DGIF should continue to develop trail systems within wildlife management areas (WMAs) to facilitate access for nature study, bird watching, hunting and fishing. DGIF manages several large wildlife management areas in the district. Fairy Stone Farms, Turkeycock Mountain and White Oak Mountain WMAs provide more than 10,000 acres of public lands for hunting, nature study, trail use and open space. Additionally, under a lease agreement with American Electric Power that is in effect until 2010, DGIF manages Smith Mountain WMA, which adds an additional several thousand acres in the region that is available to the public.

- DGIF should continue to investigate opportunities to acquire in-holdings in their WMAs and to improve each area with trails and other structures for wildlife viewing and other outdoor recreation. They should also acquire additional lands wherever feasible to provide additional access for public hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing recreation.

38 Fairy Stone Farms, Turkeycock Mountain, White Oak Mountain and Smith Mountain wildlife management areas are large open spaces that can meet many regional demands for dispersed recreation. Nature study, wildlife viewing, picnicking and fishing are also available. Consideration should be given to providing additional recreational facilities such as camping.

In a combined effort with local governments, hiking trails should be more fully developed for use outside of the normal hunting season. Trails could be designed so that horseback riding and bicycling may take place on roads and larger trails.

State forests

- Local and regional agencies should encourage the use of Department of Forestry (DOF) Best Management Practices in floodplain forest areas, particularly those adjacent to state-designated scenic waterways.
- Local and regional agencies should use DOF properties as field classrooms to help with educational programs.
- Local and regional agencies should coordinate with DOF and seek the assistance of local trail and river user organizations to develop forest trails and publish maps for each state forest, as well as establish greenways and blueways for public use.
- Local and regional agencies should investigate opportunities to acquire fee simple ownership or easements to conserve working farms and forests in the region.
- Local and regional agencies should work with DOF to create defensible space around buildings to reduce the risk of wild fires through the DOF Fire Wise Program.
- Localities should work with DOF on education and monitoring of tree diseases and other pests that could weaken the forested environments.
- Agricultural lands should be targeted for reforestation to protect the water quality of the area and limit the effects of erosion on these lands.

Other state lands

- The Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville should continue to increase understanding and appreciation for the natural resources of the Commonwealth through education, research, collections, publications and exhibits.

For a discussion of other state lands, see Chapter IX-C: Resource Agencies.

The following state-owned lands contain significant undeveloped open space that may have some potential for local recreational use. Each site should be assessed and, where appropriate, a cooperative agreement should be developed to make these resources available for local use as parks and open space.

39 Danville Community College has 40 acres of wooded land that may be suitable for recreational use.

40 Patrick Henry Community College in Henry County has 80 acres of land that may have recreational potential.

41 The Board of Directors of the Virginia Community College System currently holds title to a 380-acre parcel of land in Franklin County near Burnt Chimney that was donated by the owner with the requirement that it be used for public educational and recreational purposes. Local and state agencies should participate jointly in planning for the use of the **James Turner Smith Estate Tract** to ensure that local recreational and open space needs are addressed.

Transportation programs

- Local and regional agencies should develop alternatives to the use of private automobiles for daily activities. Transit systems, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, improved community design, as well as a change in people's attitudes toward transportation alternatives will be needed for the transportation system of the future to meet capacity needs and energy constraints.
- Local and regional agencies should work with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to implement Context Sensitive Solutions that accommodate multiple transportation modes.
- Local and regional agencies should recognize the need for a network of low-speed, low-volume roadways used by equestrians, pedestrians and cyclists, and they should include protections for this network in their comprehensive plan.
- Local and regional agencies should encourage the development of a permanent process for integrating

the recommendations of local public health agencies, and they should include “active living” opportunities into all phases of transportation planning, land use planning and project design.

Local and regional parks and recreation departments

All of the localities in Region 12 are served by a parks and recreation department. For a discussion of local and regional parks and recreation departments, see Chapter IX-D: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Explore reclamation of abandoned landfills by creating new and needed parks.
- Consider cooperative management for the recreational use of private, corporate and state or federally owned lands in order to increase local access and meet outdoor recreation needs.

42 North Carolina is acquiring land along the **Mayo River** for a river oriented state park. The Henry County Board of Supervisors, through the 2007 General Assembly (HJR 709), requested that a study be undertaken to determine the feasibility of establishing a state park along the South Mayo and North Mayo River in Henry County, Virginia. Development of a park on both sides of the state line would help protect the river while enhancing eco-tourism in both states. A part of the study will address the feasibility of a local or regional park. DCR will complete the final report by November 30, 2007.

43 The **Southern Virginia Recreational Facilities Authority** has been established to operate a soccer complex and river access facility on the Smith River near Martinsville and a new arena near Martinsville. The authority will seek funding to expand the range of recreational facilities they can offer.

Private sector

This region is a major destination area for vacationers. Much of the demand for outdoor recreation is met by the private sector. The following recommendations pertain to this region:

- Regional and local organizations and businesses should assess the expansion capability for the hospitality industry to support outdoor recreation venues. Bed and breakfasts, hotels, motels and camping facilities that are located in attractive settings near recreation areas may find ample demand to justify the investment.

- Local governments and developers should give design consideration to the natural contours of the land when planning and constructing.
- Regional and local organizations should continue to support campgrounds, resident summer camps for children, golf courses, tennis courts, swimming pools, marinas and indoor recreational facilities to help meet the needs identified in the 2006 Virginia Outdoors Survey.
- Regional and local organizations and businesses should assess entrepreneurial opportunities that may exist for outfitter services to provide canoeing, kayaking, boat launches, canoe-in campgrounds, multi-field sports complexes and swimming pools.
- Private landowners should consider fee-based hunting, fishing and boating access.
- The impact the private sector has on the supply of outdoor recreation areas and facilities is made clear when a major manufacturer closes its doors and leaves a community. Many of the recreational facilities that had been developed on the manufacturing plant's property are sold along with the plant to a new buyer who may have no interest in providing recreation. Private businesses should consider transferring title to recreation areas and facilities to local governments before disposing of unwanted property to maintain the maximum numbers of parks, playing fields or recreation areas in public ownership.

44 **The DuPont Wildlife Habitat Improvement Area** in Martinsville is a 548-acre parcel that the company has made available to the Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Council to manage for wildlife habitat. It lies along the Smith River and provides opportunities for hiking, canoeing and nature study. Public access to the Smith River could be improved on this property.

45 **Smith Mountain Dam and Leesville Dam** were constructed by Appalachian Power Company (APCO, a subsidiary of American Electric Power) as pumped storage hydro-electric projects. The lakes that the two dams created provide most of the flat water recreational acreage in the region. These lakes have become important destination tourist attractions and popular second home or retirement locations. In 2005, a Shoreline Management Plan was developed for the project that establishes a framework for management of the lakes' important natural, scenic and recreational resources. APCO should remain attentive to the need to protect major portions of the lakes' waterfront from development to ensure that those natural, scenic and recreational values are retained and properly protected from development.

Table X-12. Region 12 (West Piedmont Planning District) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Baseball	598,037	118	fields	96	22	26
Basketball	533,249	126	goals	126	0	4
Bicycling	416,134	30	miles	NI		
Mountain	59,804	4	miles	NI		
Other	356,330	25	miles	NI		
Lake, river and bay use (combined)	791,402	15,171	water acres	21,550	-6,379	-5,909
Power boating	394,206	9,501	water acres	S		
Sailing	55,817	483	water acres	S		
Saltwater fishing	179,411	1,009	water acres	S		
Jet ski, personal watercraft	57,312	898	water acres	S		
Water skiing, towed on water	104,656	3,279	water acres	S		
Camping	273,602	1,614	sites	1,989	-375	-325
Tent camping	116,617	688	sites	264	424	445
Developed camping	156,985	926	sites	1,725	-799	-771
Fitness trail use	123,843	10	mile trails	7	3	3
Fields (combined)	592,804	125	fields	82	43	46
Football	336,396	71	fields	82	-11	-9
Soccer	256,408	54	fields	-	54	56
Stream use (combined)	951,626	607	stream miles	2	605	624
Fresh water fishing	827,284	582	stream miles	S		
Human-powered boating	69,522	18	stream miles	S		
Rafting	9,967	2	stream miles	S		
Tubing	44,853	6	stream miles	S		
Golfing	261,143	9	courses	265	-6	-6
Hiking, backpacking	416,134	213	trail miles	90	124	131
Horseback riding	69,771	30	miles	43	-13	-12
In-line skating	57,312	4	miles	NI		
Jogging, running	3,341,531	268	mile trails	NI		
Nature study, programs	79,738	11	sites	-	11	12

Note: Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

NA: not applicable, no standard needed

S: same as combined

NS: not inventoried separately

NI: not inventoried

(-) indicates surplus

Table X-12. Region 12 (West Piedmont Planning District) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs – continued

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Picnicking away from home	277,090	719	tables	1,749	-1,030	-1,007
Skateboarding	97,181	30	sites	NI		
Snow skiing or snowboarding	52,328	1	ski lifts	-	1	1
Softball	393,708	70	fields	77	-7	-5
Sunbathing, relaxing on beach	591,309	42	beach acres	27	15	17
Swimming	2,491,820	173		NI		
Outdoor area	1,340,599	137	beach acres	27	110	115
Outdoor pools	742,562	31	pools	33	-2	-1
Indoor pools	408,658	5	pools	4	1	1
Tennis	156,735	98	courts	174	-76	-73
Used a playground	630,929	90	sites	154	-64	-61
Visiting gardens	123,345	14	sites	NI		
Visiting historic sites	387,976	33	sites	NI		
Visiting natural areas	441,551	75	sites	NI		
Volleyball	27,659	8	courts	10	-2	-2
Hunting	572,122	93,822	acres	19,472	74,350	77,256
Drive for pleasure	1,522,502	NA	NA	NI		
Driving motorcycle off road	94,689	43	miles	1	42	44
Driving 4-wheel-drive off road	137,548	NA	NA	NS		
Walking for pleasure	7,936,447	NA	NA	NI		
Bird watching	62,794	NA		NI		
Other	10,964	NA	NA	NI		

Note: Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

NA: not applicable, no standard needed

S: same as combined

NS: not inventoried separately

NI: not inventoried

(-) indicates surplus

Map X-24. Region 12 (West Piedmont
Planning District) Conservation Lands
(11 x 17 color)

Map X-25. Region 12 (West Piedmont
Planning District) Outdoor Recreation
(11 x 17 color)